

USPSA Area 1 Safety Training Manual



Revised August 14, 2010

Introduction

Welcome to Area 1 USPSA safety training. There is no official USPSA safety training manual. This manual was put together in 1998 by Mike McCarter to first, improve USPSA safety training at Albany Rifle and Pistol Club in Albany, Oregon and second, help future USPSA competitors better understand the sport. This version of USPSA safety training is designed to consist of three (3) parts and when finished allows you to compete at any USPSA match throughout the United States. The three parts are: reading the training manual and answering the questions on the final test, participation in a live fire safety session and shooting a match safely. All three parts must be completed in order to get your safety certification. NOTE: Each section in Area 1 will have their own method of checking the safety of first time competitors. You should check with the Section Coordinator or club rep for the club you want to shoot your first match at to see what they require. However, once you have shot in one section you may compete in any other. This USPSA safety training covers safety practices and range procedures / courtesies that are used in USPSA shooting. It does not cover shooting principles or concealed weapons criteria. Our goal is to show you how to compete in USPSA matches safely and have fun shooting in competition. You should find, however, that shooting USPSA matches will improve your ability to handle firearms safely and accurately while under stress.

USPSA shooting is not intended to put you in real-life situations or simulate any potential way you may have to use a firearm. USPSA shooting tests your skills and abilities to shoot accurately with speed. Take your time during training and your first few matches, speed will come as you feel more comfortable and with time. The single biggest mistake that new shooters make is trying to go TOO FAST TOO SOON.

The letters IPSC, stand for “International Practical Shooting Confederation”. IPSC is the governing organization that covers our type of practical shooting worldwide. USPSA (United States Practical Shooting Association) is the governing organization that covers our type of practical shooting within the United States. In addition to defining competition rules, USPSA also sets policy, procedures, markets our type of shooting, oversees the National Championships and keeps the records and statistics for everyone who becomes a member of USPSA. You do not have to be a member of USPSA to shoot in USPSA, but we recommend that you join. The advantages will be explained later in this manual. You do not have to be a member of any other club in order to shoot USPSA matches at their clubs. A list of regular club matches can be found on the Area 1 or USPSA websites.

This training manual is designed for you to study at your leisure. It **DOES NOT** replace the official **USPSA Rules and Regulations**; it is only a teaching tool. Read a section, answer the questions at the end of the section, check your answers at the end of the manual and then go on to the next section. There is a final test at the end of the manual that you must complete and turn in.

Now, **Sit Down, Buckle Up and Hang On** because you are going to feel the excitement that surrounds USPSA shooting.

Questions from the previous section:

Be sure to answer all the questions. If you are not sure about an answer, go back to the previous section and review, then answer the question. Answers to your questions are located on Pages 21 & 22, if you missed the answer then correct your original response. Be sure to write down any questions that you would like to ask the instructor.

1. What is the biggest mistake new shooters make?
2. What do the letters USPSA stand for?
3. Do you have to belong to the range the match is held at to shoot in an USPSA match?
4. What is the goal of this training program?
5. What are the three (3) parts of this safety training program?

Here is a list of commonly used words or phrases used in USPSA and what they mean.

180 LINE – The imaginary line that extends right, left, up / down and parallel with your arms and body if you stick your arms straight out to your sides while facing downrange at the targets

CATEGORY – Special shooting groups e.g. ladies, juniors, seniors and super seniors.

CLASS – Shooting level assigned by USPSA, based on Classifier stage scores

CLASSIFIER – Shooting stage used to measure a competitor's shooting level

COMSTOCK – Method of scoring where no limits are placed on time or number of rounds fired.

CREEPING – Moving between the “Standby” command and the start alarm

DIVISION – Shooting category defining the type of equipment used

DOWNRANGE – Along the centerline of the stage and TOWARDS the targets

DQ - Match Disqualification

DVC - “Diligentia, Vis, Celeritas” in Latin, “Accuracy, Power, Speed” in English.

ENGAGE – To fire at and attempt to hit.

FAULT LINES – Foot barriers set up to show the limits of movement towards targets.

FREESTYLE – No restrictions as to how you hold the handgun and shoot as long as safety rules are observed.

HARD COVER – Props, Barriers and other target obstructions that are considered to be impenetrable.

IN THE HOLE – Two competitors down the list from the shooter, follows on-deck competitor

IPSC - “International Practical Shooting Confederation”

JUNIOR – Category of a competitor who is under 18 years old.

LIMITED – Division describing type of firearm used in competition

LIMITED 10 – Division describing type of firearm limited to 10 rounds in magazine

MAGAZINE – The removable part of a semi-automatic weapon from which rounds are extracted by the mechanism upon firing.

MATCH – Shooting event consisting of four or more stages.

NO SHOOT – A target designated as **not** to be shot and that results in a penalty if hit

ON DECK – Next competitor to shoot after the current shooter

ON THE LINE – The start position at a shooting stage

OPEN- Division describing type of firearm that can have major modifications

POWER FACTOR – A representation of the power of a competitor’s ammunition calculated by multiplying the weight of the bullet in grains times the measured velocity and then dividing the result by 1000 All ammunition must have a power factor of 125 or above. A power factor of 165 or above is defined as “Major,” otherwise, the power factor is defined as “Minor.” Some divisions offer advantageous scoring for a Major power factor.

PRODUCTION – Division describing type of firearm that is double action on the first shot and has holster / magazine pouch position limitations.

PROPS – Items constructed to be part of a stage such as walls, chairs, barrels or even ramps, outhouses, telephone booths, vehicles, etc.

REVOLVER- Division which uses 6 shot revolvers

RO - Range Officer

SENIOR – Category of a competitor who is 55-64 years of age

SINGLE STACK –Division for 1911 pattern firearms using 8 or 10 round magazines and holster/magazine pouch position limitations.

SOFT COVER – Target obstructions that can be shot through without penalty.

STAGE – Individual course of fire

STRONG HAND – The hand with which you normally hold the pistol and pull the trigger and the side on which the holster is worn.

SUPER SENIOR – Category of a competitor who is 65 years of age or older

SWEEPING – Passing a portion of your body in front of the firearm muzzle

UPRANGE – Along the centerline of the stage and AWAY from the targets

USPSA - “United States Practical Shooting Association”

VIRGINIA COUNT – Method of scoring where there are limits on the number of rounds shot

WEAK HAND – The hand with which you normally do **not** pull the trigger.

Questions from the previous section:

Be sure to answer all the questions. If you are not sure about an answer, go back to the previous section and review, then answer the question. Answers to your questions are located on pages 21 & 22. If you missed the answer then correct your original response. Be sure to write down any questions that you would like to ask the instructor.

6. What is an “RO”?
7. What does “Virginia Count” mean?
8. What is a “Magazine” in USPSA shooting?
9. When you are “On The Line”, where are you?
10. What does “Comstock” mean?
11. When your back is to the targets, what direction are you facing?
12. What does “Freestyle” mean?
13. What is “Soft Cover”?
14. Does “DQ” mean Dairy Queen? If not what does it mean?
15. What is a “Stage”?
16. What category are you in if you are 60 years old?

SAFETY

The most important goal of this training program is SAFETY. USPSA affiliated ranges, during competitions, are cold ranges and handgun handling is strictly controlled. There are only two places that you can handle your handgun; at the line (when it is your time to shoot under range officer supervision) and in a Safety Area. Handling your handgun **anywhere** except in the previously mentioned areas will result in a match DQ.

You can handle your ammunition anywhere on the range EXCEPT at a Safety Area. **We do not want anyone loading a handgun in the Safety Area.** Safety Areas, at most ranges, are tables facing dirt berms and marked Safety Area. If you don't see one at the range where you are competing, ask. Do not assume you know where the Safety Area is if it is not marked.

All of these questions can be answered with a "Yes":

1. Can you load your magazines with ammunition at your car?
2. Can you load your magazines with ammunition when waiting to shoot?
3. Can you take your handgun out of its gun bag in the Safety Area?
4. Can you practice drawing your handgun in the Safety Area?
5. Can you show your buddy your handgun in the Safety Area?

When it is your time to shoot, wait for the range officer to give you the command to "Make Ready". Handling your handgun before the range officer gives you this command will result in a match DQ.

Let me give you another scenario: you are the "On Deck" competitor and testing out a shooting position, you turn around and hit your handgun on a prop and knock it out of your holster. What do you do? Answer: Get the RO's attention immediately and report it. The RO will clear the range and pick up your handgun for you. **DO NOT** pick up your handgun, it will result in a match DQ.

We cover firearm handling right up front because breaking these rules is the basis for firearm accidents in shooting competitions. USPSA matches draw large numbers of competitors and we cannot be lax about handling firearms. Later in this safety manual we will cover more safety issues and their consequences.

Questions from the previous section:

Be sure to answer all the questions. If you are not sure about an answer, go back to the previous section and review, then answer the question. Answers to your questions are located on pages 21 & 22, if you missed the answer then correct your original response. Be sure to write down any questions that you would like to ask the instructor.

17. What are the two places where you are allowed to handle your handgun while shooting in a USPSA match?
18. Where CAN'T you handle ammunition?
19. What is the penalty for handling your handgun in the wrong place?
20. What is the single most important goal in this training program?
21. You're picking up some brass, you bend down and your handgun falls out of your holster onto the ground. What do you do?

EQUIPMENT

What kind of equipment will you need to compete in a USPSA match? First, you will need ear protection in the form of ear plugs, ear muffs, special electronic ears or any combination thereof. Second, you will need eye protection in the form of corrective glasses, shooting glasses or safety glasses. As a safety consideration, eye and ear protection is mandatory in USPSA competition. In addition to safety gear you will need a handgun, a holster, a belt and some means of carrying magazines or speed loaders on the belt.

Handguns are divided into six USPSA divisions based on the type of gun, modifications and position or type of holster. Here is a list and description of each division.

1. Revolver – Minimum 9mm, no porting, compensators, optical sights. Replacement sights, replacement grips, replacement cylinder releases, internal modifications to improve function and reliability are allowed. Minimum major power factor is 165 and minimum minor power factor is 125. Power factors will be discussed in the section on Targets, Scoring and Power Factors.
2. Production – Minimum 9mm, production gun only, very minimal modifications are allowed. Minor power factor of 125, scored as minor only, double action or striker fired on first shot, holster and related equipment must be worn behind the center of hip bone. Action work to enhance reliability and replacement sights are allowed. Maximum 10 rounds in magazine after the start signal.
3. Limited 10 – Minimum 9mm, minimum major power factor is 165 and must use .40 cal or larger and minimum minor power factor is 125. Internal modifications to improve accuracy, reliability and function are allowed, external modifications such as weights or devices to control or reduce recoil are specifically not allowed.

Maximum of 10 rounds loaded in magazine after the start signal. No ports, optics or compensators are allowed.

4. Limited – Minimum 9mm, production gun only, minimum major power factor is 165 and must use .40 cal or larger and minimum minor power factor is 125. Internal modifications to improve accuracy, reliability and function are allowed, external modifications such as weights, or devices to control or reduce recoil are specifically not allowed. Maximum magazine length is 140mm.
5. Open - Minimum major power factor is 165 and minimum minor power factor is 125. Maximum magazine length is 170mm. Optics, ports, compensators, external modifications are allowed. These are “all out” race guns.
6. Single Stack – Minimum caliber size is .38 / 9x19 and scored minor power factor. 40 caliber and larger can be minor or major power factor, gun size limited by specific USPSA rules, eight-round (8) maximum ammunition capacity for major and 10 rounds for minor. , Holsters and magazine pouches must be worn at point of hip or behind, race gun holsters are prohibited and only 1911 production-type pistols that duplicate the factory 1911 service pistol as designed by John M. Browning with metal frames are allowed.

USPSA has special requirements for holsters. Here are some of the most important:

1. Holster must cover the trigger.
2. The belt carrying the holster and all allied equipment shall be at waist level. Either the belt or the inner belt or both must be permanently fixed at the waist or fixed with a minimum of three belt loops. Female competitors are permitted to wear belts carrying their holsters and other equipment at the hip level.
3. Tie-down rigs, shoulder holsters or a holster with the heel of the butt of the pistol below the top of the belt are prohibited except as allowed by USPSA rule 5.2.8.
4. A holster with the muzzle of the handgun pointing farther than three feet from the competitor’s feet while standing relaxed is prohibited.

In addition to safety gear, handgun and holster you will need approximately three or four magazines depending on the division you are competing in. Remember to wear clothing and shoes to match the type of weather expected at match time.

Questions from the previous section:

Be sure to answer all the questions. If you are not sure about an answer, go back to the previous section and review, then answer the question. Answers to your questions are located on pages 21 & 22, if you missed the answer then correct your original response. Be sure to write down any questions that you would like to ask the instructor.

22. What is the maximum number of rounds loaded in a Limited 10 handgun magazine after the start signal?
23. Can optics be used on Open guns?
24. Is ear and eye protection required in shooting an USPSA match?
25. Where must you wear the holster in Production Division?
26. Is it legal to internally modify a Limited Division handgun for reliability?
27. Can recoil reducers be used on Limited Division handguns?
28. Production Division handguns must be single action ONLY, True or False?

TARGETS, SCORING AND POWER FACTOR

Here is where the fun begins, the bottom line, the measuring stick, the place where the bullet meets the target. Remember DVC (Accuracy, Power, Speed)? USPSA has put together a unique way of measuring a competitor's shooting ability through measuring accuracy, power and speed. Let's talk about accuracy first.

The majority of targets used in USPSA competition are paper, steel Pepper Popper, steel Mini Pepper Popper and 8" round steel plates. The most common paper target is the IPSC Metric target. It is divided into four scoring zones, A, B, C, and D, by very fine cuts in the target (perforations or "perf" for short). We will show you a sample of this target in your live-fire safety session. After the "Range Is Clear" command is given, the RO will score each paper target by calling out the number of hits within each target's scoring zone, misses and the number of steel targets knocked down. An "A" hit, on paper, is always worth 5 points; B, C or D hits are worth different values depending on what Power Factor you are shooting. Take a look at the scoring chart below.

<u>Hit</u>	<u>Value (Major)</u>	<u>Value (Minor)</u>
A	5	5
B	4	3
C	4	3
D	2	1
Steel	5*	5*

*Almost always scored 5 points, but can be worth 10

USPSA established the Power Factor formula to equalize the scoring between larger and smaller handguns. It stands to reason that a .45 caliber handgun will recoil more and take longer to bring the sights back on target than a 9mm handgun. Thus, USPSA established a Power Factor formula to even the competition between handgun calibers. Here is the formula: bullet weight (in grains) times bullet velocity in feet per second divided by 1000. If the Power Factor falls in the area of 125 to 164, then that handgun is considered to be MINOR (for scoring purposes). If the Power Factor falls in the area of 165 or higher, then the handgun is considered to be MAJOR (for scoring purposes). If the Power Factor is less than 125, the handgun can be used but scores will not count and the competitor will not be recognized in the match. Here is an example: a .45 caliber handgun shooting a 200-grain bullet at 850 feet per second. Using the formula (200 X 850 divided by 1000) the Power Factor is 170 and considered MAJOR. Production Division handguns are always scored as MINOR power factor. 45s, 10mm and 40s are normally considered MAJOR power factor whereas most 9mm ammunition is MINOR. Most local matches do not chronograph to check Power Factors and take the competitor's word. Matches above the regular monthly level will normally chronograph each competitor's ammunition to verify the Power Factor. When you sign up for a match you will be asked what Power Factor you're shooting. The computer automatically assigns a point value to your hits depending on your Power Factor.

Here is the Third part of DVC. Speed is measured by a timer that measures your shots out to the hundredth of a second. After the RO pushes the start button, the buzzer sounds and you begin shooting. The timer records every shot, including the last shot fired. The last shot fired is your total time for that stage.

Now we add another USPSA measuring tool called the HIT FACTOR. The hit factor is a formula put in place to even out the faster competitors versus the more accurate competitors. Here is the formula: Total Points Scored (minus penalties) divided by Time = Hit Factor. All competitors are ranked by Hit Factor, in their division, on each stage fired. Stage points are given by this ranking and match totals are figured by totaling stage points.

For example:

Shooter A scores 100 points in 10 seconds: $100/10 = 10$ HF

Shooter B scores 110 points in 11.5 seconds; $110/11.5 = 9.57$ HF

Shooter C scores 90 points in 9.5 seconds: $90/9.5 = 9.47$ HF

The higher the hit factor wins. Notice that the fastest shooter or the most accurate shooter won't always win. USPSA requires a blend of speed and accuracy to come out on top.

If you noticed in the above paragraph that "minus penalties" was put in the formula, so what are the penalties? The *written stage briefing* describes the course of fire and tells you how many rounds score on paper and the value of knocked down steel. It is your responsibility to read and understand the course description. If you have a question, ask

the RO before you shoot. If the *written stage briefing* states that the best two hits on paper score, then you have to put two hits on paper otherwise there is a penalty for each round missed. Here is a list of penalties most often seen and their values:

Miss: -10 points or twice the scoring value (except for targets that disappear) for each hit missed.

Hit on a No Shoot target: -10 points

Failure to engage a non-disappearing target: -10 points

Extra shot (Virginia Count or Fixed Time): -10 points

Extra hit (Virginia Count or Fixed Time): -10 points

Failure to follow course description (called a procedural): -10 points one time or per shot fired or Match DQ depending on the seriousness of the penalty as described in the USPSA rule book.

Please remember that you can never score below a zero on any stage and it does not affect your score on another stage. We will explain Virginia Count, Fixed Time and Procedurals later in the manual. A miss does not score a penalty on disappearing targets. Here is an example of scoring where penalties apply. Most paper targets require at least two hits on paper. Often you will see a No-Shoot target partially covering a regular target. This reduces the scoring area on the regular target. If you shoot twice and put one round in the good target (A zone hit) and one round in the No-Shoot target, your score on that target will be 5 points for the “A” hit, -10 points for the miss and -10 for hitting the No-Shoot target. Ask your instructor to explain partial hits on No-Shoots that partially cover regular targets during the live-fire safety session.

Questions from the previous section:

Be sure to answer all the questions. If you are not sure about an answer, go back to the previous section and review, then answer the question. Answers to your questions are located on pages 21 & 22, if you missed the answer then correct your original response. Be sure to write down any questions that you would like to ask the instructor.

29. A hit in the A zone is worth how many points?

30. Why does USPSA use a Power Factor?

31. If you are shooting a 200-grain bullet at 800 feet per second, what is your power factor and are you shooting Major or Minor?

32. When you knock down a steel target, what score do you get (normally)?

33. What is the formula for Hit Factor?

34. What is the penalty for a miss on a non-disappearing target?
35. What is the penalty for hitting a No-Shoot target?
36. How do you know how many rounds score on paper on a particular stage?
37. Whom do you ask if you don't understand the *written stage briefing*?
38. Could you lose scoring points if you fail to follow the *written stage briefing*?
39. Does the fastest shooter win the stage?

STAGES

Stages or “courses of fire” are designed to challenge the competitor without giving an advantage or disadvantage to physical differences in people. Stages should be neither too easy nor too hard, but fun to shoot. Stages should be eight-round neutral, which means that targets are arranged in arrays that require eight rounds or fewer to be fired and then there is some movement (time to reload) before the next array of targets. Each stage has a *written stage briefing, including a course description*, and it is the shooter's responsibility to understand the course of fire before he/she shoots. Any questions should be directed to the RO. We will show you a sample course description at your live-fire safety session. The major parts of a course description are: Starting Position, Scoring Section, Stage Procedure and Stage layout.

The Starting Position ensures that all competitors start the same way.

The Scoring section indicates the type of scoring, round count, points available, number and types of targets, scored hits, how the stage starts and ends and possible penalties or procedurals. There are three types of stages, Comstock, Virginia Count and Fixed Time. The most common type is Comstock, which means that you can shoot as many rounds as you want to hit all the targets. The time from the starting buzzer to the last shot fired is the Total Time.

Virginia Count means that you have to shoot the exact number of rounds (as stated in the *written stage briefing*) and there are penalties for extra shots and extra hits on targets. The time from the starting buzzer to the last shot fired is the Total Time.

Fixed Time is exactly what it sounds like. You have a fixed amount of time to engage as many targets as the course description states. There are penalties for extra rounds fired

and extra hits during the course of fire plus penalties for going overtime on the stop buzzer, however there are no penalties for misses.

The course description tells you what to do in the stage and how to complete it. If there are special procedures to follow, e.g. mandatory reloads, this is where you will find them. Read it carefully because failure to follow these instructions can lead to –10 point procedural penalties. In some cases, special penalties are described in this section.

The approximate layout of the stage is shown in the Stage Layout section. Due to limitations of two-dimensional drawings, this section only indicates approximately how the stage is designed.

Questions from the previous section:

Be sure to answer all the questions. If you are not sure about an answer, go back to the previous section and review, then answer the question. Answers to your questions are located on pages 21 & 22, if you missed the answer then correct your original response. Be sure to write down any questions that you would like to ask the instructor

40. What are the three types of stages?
41. Are you limited to the number of rounds fired in a Comstock stage?
42. Whose responsibility is it to understand the *written stage briefing*?
43. What happens if you fire a round after the buzzer has sounded ending a Fixed Time stage?
44. What type of stage is Virginia Count?
45. What section on the *written stage briefing* tells you how many rounds count on paper targets?

CLASSIFIER STAGES AND CLASSIFICATIONS

In most matches there is one stage called the Classifier stage. It comes from the USPSA National Classification Book and has to be set up precisely according to the instructions in the book. All clubs across the United States use Classifier Stages out of this book and USPSA keeps on file the scores of each USPSA competitor for each Classifier stage. All scores are compared with those of the competitor who shot the highest hit factor in the U.S. Each USPSA member who shoots that same stage is given a percentile figure based on how his/her hit factor compares to the best. When you join USPSA and shoot at least four classifiers you will be given a card with your classification level within that division. Here are the levels and their percentages:

Unclassified – not enough classifiers recorded.

D – 2 to 40%

C – 40 to 59.9%

B – 60 to 74.9%

A – 75 to 84.9%

Master – 85 to 94.9%

Grand Master 95 to %100

New members who do not have enough classifier stages in and non-USPSA members are unclassified shooters. After you receive your first classification, each classifier score that is sent in to USPSA moves your average either up or down. You never go down in classification if your average percentage drops. Example: once you become a “C” class shooter and your average drops to 39%, you still stay a “C” class shooter, however, if your average goes up to 60% then you move up to a “B” class shooter. Under special circumstances, a request to USPSA to lower your classification can be granted. Why do we have these Classifications? This allows competitors with similar shooting abilities (division / class) to compete against each other no matter where the match takes place. Example: “B” Class Limited shooters compete against all other “B” Class Limited shooters regardless of where the match is held (Oregon or New York). This is the same for every Division and every Class.

Once you have your initial classification and continue to shoot classifiers USPSA will look at the average of the highest six of the eight most-recent percentages, on a monthly basis to see if they need to move you up. As you score better with the classifiers, the lower scores will drop out and your average will move up.

USPSA classified competitors can go anywhere in the United States and compete against shooters in their own class. The classification system is not perfect, but it is surprisingly accurate in estimating a shooter’s skill level.

All Classifier scores must be sent to USPSA; however, scores that are above a shooters average by more than 15% are not counted. Scores that are more than 5% below the

bottom of the member's class bracket are not counted. This keeps the average from changing too fast and gives a more accurate percentage for each USPSA member.

Questions from the previous section:

Be sure to answer all the questions. If you are not sure about an answer, go back to the previous section and review, then answer the question. Answers to your questions are located on pages 21 & 22, if you missed the answer then correct your original response. Be sure to write down any questions that you would like to ask the instructor

46. Why do USPSA competitors shoot Classifier stages?
47. Can a USPSA competitor be classified if he/she doesn't belong to USPSA?
48. How many Classifier stages do you need to shoot to be classified?
49. What is the highest classification a competitor can reach?
50. Once you become a "C" class shooter can you go down to a "D" class shooter?
51. If you have a 70% Classifier average, what class are you?
52. After your initial classification, how often does USPSA look at your averages?

STAGE COMMANDS

The Range Officer (RO) is the match official in charge of competitor action on a stage. This official ensures that competitors comply with the stage instructions safely. The Range Officer stations himself/herself in close proximity to the competitor to issue the range commands and oversee safe competitor behavior.

Now it is your turn to shoot. You step up to the line and wait for the Range Officer's commands. Here is what you should hear:

1. "Range is Hot" *Optional* Command to signal to spectators that the course of fire will begin soon.

2. “Make Ready” The competitor faces down range and prepares the handgun (in most cases this is where the handgun is loaded) in accordance with the *written stage briefing*. The competitor then assumes the required ready (start) position. If you have any questions about the stage, ask the Range Officer before you prepare your handgun, this is also the time to take a sight picture with an unloaded handgun. Good protocol is to ask the RO if you can take a sight picture.
3. “Are You Ready?” You have several options at this point. First, if there is a lack of any negative response, the RO will assume you are ready. Second, you can say nothing, “ready” or nod your head up and down. Third, you must shout “Not Ready” or give a clear indication you are not ready to go otherwise the RO will continue.
4. “Standby” This command will be followed by the start signal within 1-4 seconds. If you move after the “Standby” command and before the start signal you could be assessed a procedural penalty for “Creeping”.
5. “Start Signal” The audible or visual signal to begin the course of fire.
6. “Stop” This command may be issued by range officials at any time during the course of fire. The competitor shall immediately cease firing, stand still and wait for further instructions from the Range Officer.
7. “If You Are Finished, Unload and Show Clear” When the Range Officer issues this command and the competitor has finished the course of fire, the competitor shall lower his/her handgun, drop the magazine, unload the chamber and hold the handgun open for inspection by the RO.
8. “If Clear, Hammer Down, Holster” This command is given after the Range Officer is satisfied that the handgun is unloaded and safe for further action (holster or bag). At some clubs a competitor can either holster or bag his/her handgun upon this command due to weather. Major matches usually require competitors to come to the line with his/her handgun holstered. If that is the case you must bag and un-bag at a Safety Area if you don’t want to carry your handgun in the holster between stages.
9. “Range is Clear” The competitor, range officials and other squad members now go down range to score, tape and set targets. This command signifies that the live fire portion of the stage is over for you. You should always follow the RO when your targets are scored, just to verify scoring.

Questions from the previous section:

Be sure to answer all the questions. If you are not sure about an answer, go back to the previous section and review, then answer the question. Answers to your questions are

located on pages 21 & 22, if you missed the answer then correct your original response. Be sure to write down any questions that you would like to ask the instructor

53. What happens if you move after the “Standby” command and before the start buzzer?
54. When you come to the line as the next shooter, what are the six commands you will hear during the course of fire (not the optional commands)?
55. What do you do when you hear the “Stop” command?
56. How do you know it is okay to go down range after a competitor finishes shooting a stage?
57. What do you do if the RO asks “Are You Ready” and you are not ready?
58. Why does a RO shout: “Range is Hot”?
59. When it is your turn to shoot a stage at what point do you load your handgun?

SAFETY AND DISQUALIFICATIONS

Disqualifications (DQ’s) take place when competitors break major safety rules. If you participate in this sport for any length of time you will be DQ’d and when that happens try to handle it gracefully. You probably will not be happy that it happened and it is not something to brag about, so learn from it and maintain a good attitude. A DQ means a competitor is disqualified from the entire match not just the stage he/she is shooting. Here is a brief list of reasons for disqualification:

1. Accidental Discharge – Any shot fired outside the confines of the backstop or side berms or which strikes the ground within 10 feet of the competitor.
2. Unsafe Gun Handling – Any discharge prior to commencement or while loading, reloading, unloading or during remedial action in the case of a malfunction.
 - a. Any discharge during movement except while engaging targets.
 - b. In the event of a discharge following the Range Officer’s command “If clear, hammer down, holster”.

3. If at any time during the course of fire, a competitor allows the muzzle to point rearwards, that is further than 90 degrees from the median intercept of the backstop, whether the firearm is loaded or not. Ask for a demonstration.
4. Handling a handgun at any time except when in a designated Safety Area or on the Firing Line under the supervision of a Range Officer.
5. If at any time during the course of fire, or while loading or unloading, a competitor drops his/her handgun or causes it to fall, loaded or not.
6. Allowing the muzzle of a loaded handgun to point at any part of the competitor's body during a course of fire (sweeping).
7. Failure to keep the finger outside the trigger guard while loading or unloading, moving or clearing a malfunction.
8. Holstering a loaded handgun with the safety not applied or hammer cocked on a revolver.

The list above covers major safety violations, there are others listed in section 10 of the latest edition of the USPSA Rule Book. There are two additional reasons for disqualification not directly related to Safety. These are for "Unsportsmanlike Conduct" and "Using Prohibited Substances".

If you have an equipment failure while shooting a stage, you are not disqualified. The stage will be scored and you will be allowed to compete in the balance of the stages in the match once your equipment has been repaired. You will not get to re-shoot the stage that your equipment broke on.

Questions from the previous section:

Be sure to answer all the questions. If you are not sure about an answer, go back to the previous section and review, then answer the question. Answers to your questions are located on pages 21 & 22, if you missed the answer then correct your original response. Be sure to write down any questions that you would like to ask the instructor

60. If your handgun breaks during a stage, can you fix it and re-shoot the stage?
61. Can a competitor be DQ'd for unsportsmanlike conduct?
62. Where is your trigger finger while you are reloading your handgun?

63. If you're shooting a course of fire and you reach in front of your handgun to open a door, what is that called? And what is the result?
64. What can happen if you pick up your uncased handgun at your car?
65. What happens if your handgun fires after the "If Clear, Hammer Down, Holster" command?

PROTOCOL AND COURTESIES

Now after absorbing all the information about safety, targets, scoring and equipment it is time to walk through a typical USPSA match. Please remember that each club runs things a little differently, so be flexible. Make sure you know what time the match starts and show up early to give yourself time to sign up and review the stages.

When you sign up, if you are a new competitor at that club, the stats person will ask you your USPSA Number, Name, Address, Phone, Division, Class, Power Factor, and Special Category. Some clubs require you to fill out a match registration form, which you give to the stats person. After you register and collect your score sheets, you need to put your name on the squad list. This gives you the opportunity to shoot with your friends. Most clubs try to accommodate squadding requests, however there are times when people must be moved around to balance squads out. Note: not all clubs allow special squadding, so be sure to ask about it. If you have spare time before the match begins take a look at the different stages.

At the starting time the match director will call everyone together for announcements and the walk through of the stages. During the walk through, each stage will be explained and questions answered. A normal match has five or six stages and somewhere between 100 to 130 total round count. For your first match (and many more after) you may shoot more than this though. Squadding will be announced, along with the stage that your squad starts on.

When you get to the first stage, that your squad is shooting, someone will ask you for your score sheet, for that stage. Your name and competitor number should be on every score sheet. All score sheets, for that stage, will be mixed up and one competitor's score sheet is drawn to be the first shooter. The shooting order is read with the shooter first, the second shooter (ON DECK PERSON), the third shooter (IN-THE-HOLE-PERSON) and then down the list. The shooting order will be read each time a shooter completes the stage. New competitors, most of the time, will never have to go first. That way they get a chance to watch someone else shoot the stage first. If you are the "Shooter, On Deck or In The Hole" person it is your responsibility to get ready to shoot the stage. If you have

just finished shooting, you should be putting your gear away and reloading magazines for the next stage. Then, help the other competitors in your squad by taping targets, setting steel or picking up empty brass. Remember: DO NOT move forward into the stage area until you hear the “RANGE IS CLEAR” command. If you’re taping targets, watch the way the RO scores so you don’t tape a target that hasn’t been scored. When squads work together to get everything done, the day moves quite fast.

If you are the “On Deck” or “In the Hole” person and you hear the “Range Clear” command, you can step forward into the stage and see what it looks like. Remember, the “On Deck” person is the next shooter and has the priority to check out the stage first. It is permissible to pretend you are shooting the stage and practice which way you will move, BUT NEVER touch your gun or use anything (sighting aids) in your hands to practice the stage.

Now, it is your turn to shoot. The adrenaline is pumping, not to mention your heart. Concentrate and listen to the RO; he/she will walk you through everything. Don’t worry about going fast; speed will come later after you learn safety and accuracy.

Okay, you’ve shot the stage, now breathe. When you hear “Range Is Clear” walk with the RO and scorekeeper while they score your targets. Do not touch a target - you could lose the score on any target touched - but look at your hits. If you don’t agree with the RO about your hits, ASK. ROs do make mistakes in scoring. The scorekeeper will present your score sheet to you for approval and your initials. The score sheet will only show total hits by zone, time and any penalties or procedural. The computer does all of the hit factor work. When you initial the score sheet, you are stating that you agree with the score, which is then final.

Sometimes there are problems with targets and stage props during a course of fire. The RO will stop the competitor and tell him/her to re-shoot the stage. The competitor has the option to re-shoot it right away or move down the shooting list. My recommendation is to move as far down the list as you can. This gives you a chance to get your magazines loaded and get your head straight about the stage. Here is a short list of re-shoot reasons: target failure, taped targets before being scored, interruption during the course of fire for a reason beyond the competitor’s control (something coming in the stage area), bumping into the RO (you have to ask for the re-shoot in this case) or if you are stopped by the RO because he/she thinks there is a problem with your handgun / ammunition and there isn’t (squib load). During a squib load situation (Low power round going off), the RO will stop the competitor to make sure the bullet has cleared the gun barrel. If there is no bullet in the barrel, the competitor gets a re-shoot. If there is a bullet in the barrel, the targets are scored, including misses and penalties for failure to engage targets, and no re-shoot is permitted.

ANSWERS TO THE SAFETY MANUAL QUESTIONS

QUESTION

1. Going too fast
2. United States Practical Shooting Association
3. No
4. How to compete in USPSA matches safely and have fun shooting in competition
5. Complete the safety manual final test, attend a live fire safety session and shooting a match safely
6. Range Officer
7. Method of scoring where there are limits on the number of rounds shot
8. The removable part of a semi-automatic weapon from which rounds are extracted by the mechanism upon firing.
9. The start position at a shooting stage
10. Method of scoring where no limits are placed on time or number of rounds fired
11. Up range
12. No restrictions as to how you hold the handgun and shoot as long as safety rules are observed.
13. Target obstructions that can be shot through without penalty
14. No, match disqualification
15. Individual course of fire
16. Senior
17. At the line and in the Safety Area
18. In the Safety Area
19. Match DQ
20. Safety
21. Get an RO's attention; Do not pick up your handgun
22. 10 rounds
23. Yes
24. Yes
25. Behind the center of the hip bone
26. Yes
27. No
28. False
29. 5
30. Equalize scoring between larger and smaller handguns
31. 160, minor
32. 5 points
33. Total Points divided by Total Time
34. -10 points
35. -10 points
36. It is stated in the *written stage briefing*
37. RO
38. Yes, -10 points per procedural

39. No, it could be the slower more accurate shooter, it depends on Hit Factor
40. Comstock, Virginia Count, Fixed Time
41. NO
42. The competitor
43. You get a penalty
44. Exact Round Count
45. Scoring Section
46. To establish his/her shooting level
47. NO
48. 4
49. Grand Master
50. Under special circumstances, a request to USPSA to lower your classification can be granted.
51. "B" Class
52. Every month
53. There is a penalty for "Creeping", potentially a -10 point penalty
54. "Make Ready", "Are You Ready", "Standby", "If You are Finished, Unload and Show Clear", "If Clear, Hammer Down, Holster", "Range is Clear"
55. Stop and wait for further commands from the RO
56. When you hear the "Range is Clear" command
57. Shout "Not Ready"
58. To make sure everyone knows that a stage of fire is commencing
59. When the RO gives the command to "Make Ready"
60. No
61. Yes
62. Out of the trigger guard
63. Sweeping, Match DQ
64. Match DQ
65. Match DQ

FINAL TEST MUST BE COMPLETED AND TURNED IN.

NAME: _____ **DATE:** _____

(Please Print Your Name)

- 1. What can happen if you handle your handgun at your car?**
- 2. What do you do when you hear the “Stop” command?**
- 3. Why do USPSA competitors shoot classifier stages?**
- 4. What are the three types of stages?**
- 5. What is the penalty for a miss on a non-disappearing target?**
- 6. A hit in the “A” zone is worth how many points?**
- 7. Is ear and eye protection required in shooting a USPSA match?**
- 8. Where CAN’T you handle ammunition?**
- 9. What does DQ mean?**
- 10. What is an RO?**
- 11. What is the biggest mistake new shooters make?**
- 12. At what point do you load your handgun?**
- 13. When is it okay to move forward on the range after a competitor finishes the stage?**
- 14. Whose responsibility is it to understand the course of fire?**
- 15. What is the penalty for hitting a “No-Shoot” target?**
- 16. What are the two places you can handle your handgun?**
- 17. What does “Comstock” mean?**
- 18. What is the goal of this training program?**
- 19. Where is your trigger finger during reloading your handgun?**
- 20. Does the fastest competitor win the stage?**